

# An Analysis of the Intergenerational Transmission Path of the New Social Stratum Social Capital

Pinxian He

South-Central Minzu University, Wuhan 430074, China.

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**Abstract:** At first, the new social stratum was put forward as a concept of United front and improved continuously with the development of society. In 2020, the new social class is defined as four major groups: management technicians of private enterprises and foreign-invested enterprises, employees of intermediary and social organizations, freelancers and new media employees. Social capital refers to the degree to which people can mobilize social networks. The greater the degree of mobilization, the deeper the social capital. The intergenerational transmission of social capital is the phenomenon that the father transfers the existing social capital to the offspring through various methods. Based on the characteristics of the new social stratum, this paper analyzes the path of education, occupation and human capital in the intergenerational transmission of the social capital of the new social stratum, and probes into the positive and negative functions of this intergenerational transmission path. as a result, new construction measures are obtained to optimize the new intergenerational transmission path of social stratum.

**Keywords:** New Social Stratum; The Intergenerational Transmission; Social Stratification

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## Introduction

Over the past 40 years of reform and opening up, great changes have taken place in China's social structure. Under the role of market economy, China's social stratum tends to be diversified, and the new social stratum is a new intermediate force rising in this process. With the in-depth development of globalization, the continuous transformation and upgrading of the economic structure, and the rapid rise and growth of high-tech industries, they have become high-income groups that can not be ignored outside the system of our country. this brings new challenges to the study of static social stratification and dynamic social mobility in China. Since China entered into high-speed industrialization, the research on social mobility has never stopped, among which there is no lack of many achievements in exploring the problem of intergenerational transmission, but because the new social stratum is closely related to new industries and new industries, their demands and behavior motives are also more diverse and complex, and show unique stratum characteristics in intergenerational transmission. This paper intends to deconstruct the intergenerational transmission path of the new social stratum social capital in order to obtain another cognitive perspective of the middle class in the non-public economy of our country.

## 1. The concept analysis of the new social stratum and the cost transmission of social capital

### 1.1 The definition and social composition of the new social stratum

With the further deepening of reform and opening up and the comprehensive and rapid development of the market economic system, China's social structure is developing in a more pluralistic direction. In order to coordinate the unified strategic work with the actual situation of China's economic situation, in 2015, the political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee formally brought "new social strata" into the scope of United front work. In December 2020, the "new social strata" in the regulations on the work of Communist Party of China United Front examined and approved by the CPC Central Committee include four major groups: management technicians of private enterprises and foreign-invested enterprises, employees of intermediary and social organizations, freelancers, and new media practitioners.

From the perspective of sociology, the new social stratum can be extended from the concept of United front to the out-of-system middle class in social stratification, that is, the white-collar group. According to the news released by the United Front work Department of the CPC Central Committee, the total population of the new social stratum in China is about 70 million, of which private enterprises and foreign-funded management and technical personnel account for a relatively large proportion, and the four groups show unbalanced characteristics.

## **1.2 The definition of intergenerational transmission of social capital**

Social capital means that people set up a social relationship network in the process of communication, and use this network to facilitate the process of personal action. Social capital has two characteristics: first, the maintenance of social capital depends on individual interaction, the obligation of communication between people can maintain the stability and security of the network, and social capital is mutual; second, the stock of social capital that a person has depends on the human economy and other resources that he can mobilize in the interpersonal network.

With the profound changes of China's social structure, the trend of stratum solidification is becoming more and more obvious. In the case of the competitive expansion of social resources, the individuality and non-transferability of social capital have changed. Instead, fathers use strong relationship networks to participate in the social actions of their offspring. Therefore, the intergenerational transmission of social capital refers to the transmission of social capital accumulated by parents and above to their children to help children inherit their father's capital network to the greatest extent, so that their offspring can achieve the same status as their fathers in cultural reproduction.

## **2. New social stratum social capital intergenerational transfer concrete path**

### **2.1 Analysis of intergenerational transmission education paths of social capital**

China's new social class generally presents the characteristics of high education. Research shows that about 67% of the managerial and technical personnel in private enterprises and foreign-invested enterprises have a bachelor's degree or above, and 77% of the employees in intermediary organizations and social organizations have university degrees. Eighty-seven percent of freelancers have a college degree or above, while 77 percent of new media workers have a college degree or above. It can be seen that most of the new social classes are knowledgeable and technical talents who are altruistic in their educational concepts. They are more inclined to invest more economic and human resources in the education of their children, so as to ensure the cultural reproduction of their own cultural level in their children. In addition, the educational background of parents also affects the educational intention of their children to a large extent. Families with high educational background often have a stronger educational atmosphere, and their children are more inclined to achieve the same high achievements as their parents under the influence of their parents.

Pierre Bourdieu believes that the function of education is not only socialization, but also the "voucher" for individuals to enter a certain profession or class. In order to enable their children to get this "voucher", parents will often try their best to find a better educational environment and more educational institutions for their offspring. For example, after the implementation of the double reduction policy, out-of-school training institutions have been cracked down. Any self-media forbids the advertisement of extracurricular tutorial courses or institutions for primary and secondary schools, and the phenomenon of primary and secondary school students participating in after-school subject training has been effectively curbed. However, the author observes that restricting training institutions can not really alleviate the "theater effect" of students' parents. Many parents worry that their children will not receive better school education or for their children to achieve better grades. They often use their own social capital to find tutors for their children. Families tend to have higher demands on their parents' ability to collect information than to ask training institutions to arrange make-up lessons. In this process, the new social stratum works in the field of non-public economy, has a broader interpersonal network, and their social resources are more mobile and open. Therefore, there are rich channels to collect educational information and find high-quality educational resources for their children. At the same time, previous studies have found that intellectuals outside the system are also more willing to give full play to their social capital advantages in terms of their children's enrollment, allowing their children to study in key schools or private schools and international schools, so as to increase the opportunities for their children to study abroad. A good school raises the educational starting point of the children of the new social stratum, and the possibility of their inflow into the upper class becomes wider. The new social stratum transforms into cultural capital through its own social capital, so that their offspring are marked with a hidden mark in the class stratification. In this process, education becomes the starting point of stratum differentiation.

### **2.2 Analysis of intergenerational transmission career paths of social capital**

Liang Shuming once pointed out that Chinese society is not "human standard" or "social standard", but "relationship standard". Social

individuals are in a huge network of relationships, career choice and mobility are influenced by interactive relationships. American sociologist Mark Granovetter found in his research that weak ties play an important role in obtaining heterogeneous and diversified information resources, and job seekers can get more career information in weak ties. However, Bian Yanjie and Zhang Wenhong, after measuring Chinese society, believe that strong relationships in Chinese society are more closely related to job seekers' obtaining, and employees based on trusting relationships are more willing to look for employees in strong relationship networks, that is to say, "human relations" play a greater role in career selection. Rather than obtaining more employment information, influencing employers' decisions through relationship operation is a priority for individuals with relationship networks.

The intergenerational transmission effect of social capital of new social classes is mainly reflected in the "inheritance from father to father" in the high-income industries such as financial analysts, lawyers, accountants and senior technical managers in top private enterprises. Monthly salary is the main influencing factor for the intergenerational transmission of such occupations. Children inherit their father's occupation and enter the upper level of the industry through their father's social relations. Thus, they continue to use and expand the social capital accumulated by their parents, and rely on their parents' authority and reputation to establish or strengthen their professional social network. However, the application of the network of strong and weak social capital is more prominent in the intergenerational transmission of the middle class. Compared with the children directly inheriting the position of their parents, the parents can also contact the network of weak ties to provide more career information for their children, which becomes the information capital for their children in job-hunting. It enables the children to make a more comprehensive judgment of the welfare benefits, promotion opportunities and development prospects of the industry in the career selection. Meanwhile, in the process of the children's job hunting or self-employment, the strong relationship between the parents is stable and not easy to change, the resource mobilization is quick, the structure network is clear and so on, which can directly and efficiently play the effect of replacing resources. Achieve goals that match your expectations for job hunting or starting a business.

Therefore, it is easier for children to get a job or start a business if their parents have a lot of accumulated social capital. The probability of upward mobility is also greatly increased if the parent has connections further up the ladder. Previous studies have generally confirmed that the children of families with higher socioeconomic status tend to be more inclined to the occupational power sector with considerable income, high social evaluation and large promotion space, which is also reflected in the characteristics of occupational mobility of the middle class.

### **2.3 Analysis of intergenerational transmission human capital paths of social capital**

In the 1960s, the American economist Schulz first proposed the concept of human capital. At the same time (1963), the economist Becker summarized human capital as "the comprehensive characteristics of knowledge, ability and health level condensed on human resources formed by investing in human activities such as education, on-the-job training, medical care, migration and information collection. Effective use of these characteristics can increase people's monetary or psychological income." It can be seen that the heterogeneous characteristics of social capital can catalyze the integration of human capital and influence the cumulative scope and effectiveness of human capital. Human capital is a concept of stock and flow. In intergenerational and intergenerational flows, human capital has obvious transitivity. Parents' education level, household registration, and children's gender are all factors that affect the intergenerational transfer of human capital.

In order to enable their children to inherit their parents' human capital, parents usually take their children to participate in dinner parties, salons, New Year's greetings and other activities, through these specific social places to introduce their children to relationships and broaden their networks. For example, in a dinner party, friends, children of friends, friends of friends are all present, and several parties come to change resources. At this time, the function of the dinner party has been weakened, while the function of social interaction has been greatly enhanced. During the toast or conversation, the children and the children and the children and the parents get to know each other, establish trust mechanism and exchange information resources through mutual interaction, and all parties involved can accumulate the stock of human capital and increase the flow of human capital under mutual introduction. The household registration of the new social class is generally the urban household registration of large and medium-sized cities, and the education level of the father is mostly junior college or above, which has a social advantage in the competition of human capital investment for the children. Meanwhile, the children also have the unwritten rules to inherit the human relationship network from their parents. Of course, in this inheritance relationship, whether the mobilization of human resources of

the children will be weakened? It still depends on whether the children's own communication behavior can maintain their social stability.

Thus, in the intergenerational transmission of social capital, human capital accumulation of parents can be directly transferred to their children through social occasions, or indirectly transmitted to their children through information sharing and other ways. Intergenerational transmission of human capital exists in most strata of our country, but the effect and degree of transmission vary. The effectiveness and scale of human capital transmission of middle class have certain advantages, especially with the development of information technology, social communication and communication are no longer limited to offline, and the new social class is an active group on the Internet. Therefore, they have more diversified ways to accumulate human resources and gradually break through the limitations of time and space in the transmission of human capital to their offspring.

### **3. Functional analysis of intergenerational transmission path of social capital**

#### **3.1 The positive function of intergenerational transmission path of social capital**

Merton's functional analysis paradigm divides function into positive function and anti-function. Positive function refers to those influences that play a positive role in the social system and conform to the expected results of the society, while anti-function refers to those influences that play a negative role in the social system and do not conform to the social expectations. The new social class is more likely to form an atmosphere of advocating and pursuing knowledge in the family, influence the children's values in knowledge, facilitate the children to develop a positive idea of education, and form the idea of optimizing market competitiveness by improving their own knowledge level, which is conducive to the benign upward mobility of social class. At the same time, the new social class has great job competition, occupational mobility and rapid technological turnover, and the upward mobility of children depending on the intergenerational transmission of education can, to some extent, become a mechanism to compensate for the downward mobility of parents in occupational activities and buffer social contradictions.

Secondly, under the new development pattern, the new social stratum is an important subject to promote scientific and technological innovation. Appropriate intergenerational transmission path can optimize the team of the new social stratum, improve the scientific research ability and technical level of the management and technical personnel of private enterprises and foreign-invested enterprises, promote the employees of intermediary organizations and social organizations, and establish a sense of social service. Enrich the professional skills of freelancers, cultivate the social responsibility of new media practitioners, and guide them to publicize objective, positive and high-quality content.

#### **3.2 The inverse function of intergenerational transmission path of social capital**

##### *3.2.1 Exacerbating class solidification and hindering social benign mobility*

As mentioned above, social capital plays an important role in the intergenerational transmission, and new social classes have various advantages in the application of social capital. Most of the new social classes are concentrated in areas with a high degree of marketization. In terms of education, their children can enter schools with a high enrollment rate, and it is easier to build a mutually beneficial teacher-student relationship. In the educational system, it is easier to improve the core competitiveness than the lower class. Therefore, in some majors with high educational input, long learning cycle and upward mobility, students with low family cultural capital and low family income are increasingly rare. They have limited resources to replace cultural capital in the intergenerational transmission path, and can hardly bear the needs of economic and social networks of these industries.

The inertia of educational background is brought into the occupation. The children of the new social class enter the ideal occupation with their superior educational resume and the relationship network of their parents, while under the same conditions, job seekers with ordinary family backgrounds have limited opportunities to obtain quality positions, and often have to spend more time and energy on job hunting, and may not get the ideal job in the end. It can be seen that, under the condition of the same innate qualifications, people with small intergenerational transmission effect have limited upward mobility channels, which will undoubtedly exacerbate class solidification and hinder the

virtuous circle of social mobility.

### *3.2.2 Widen the gap between the rich and the poor and affect the effective allocation of social resources*

Class solidification will lead to the obvious “Matthew effect” of social capital, widening the gap between the rich and the poor. In the intergenerational transmission mechanism, the children not only inherit the wealth of their parents, but also inherit the social relationship network of their parents. Whether they move to non-public economic industries with high income or to public economic industries with high social evaluation and good welfare mechanism, they have a positive impact on increasing family income, and can consolidate this positive influence through the marriage of family pairs. However, due to the limitation of social capital, the economic income of the groups excluded by the intergenerational transmission mechanism of the high-income class is difficult to surpass that of their parents, leading to the widening gap between the rich and the poor.

According to economics, resources are scarce, so the rational and effective allocation of social resources on the macro level is conducive to the stable operation of social structure system. However, in the intergenerational transmission of social capital, borderline or even irregular transmission paths make the rich class more and more rich social resources, while the vulnerable groups occupy less and less effective resources. The unreasonable inclination of such resources may lead to the decline of trust and rise of contradictions between different social classes.

### *3.2.3 It is not conducive to the establishment of fair and just social mechanisms*

In the intergenerational transmission path of social capital, there are many non-standard behaviors. For example, in the school to provide teachers with other aspects of convenience, so that teachers to take care of children; Privately let the teacher provide individual tutoring for a fee; Seeking filing places for children through power or human resources operations; Use your power or network to secure quality positions in the job search process; Direct intervention in interview outcomes... These behaviors affect fair competition, lead to social inequality, prevent real quality labor force from entering the proper division of labor, and challenge the existing education and occupational access system.

## **4. Constructive measures to optimize the intergenerational transmission path of social capital**

### **4.1 Strengthen the united front and integration of new social strata and establish a more open and inclusive mobility mechanism**

The intermediate stratum is an important force in promoting the formation of Chinese “olive” social structure. With the complex of Chinese industrial structure, the structure of the intermediate stratum is increasingly diversified. Therefore, strengthening the integrated management of the new social strata is an important measure to play their role in promoting common prosperity. In this process, it is necessary to combine the characteristics of the new social strata, strengthen ideological guidance, especially pay attention to their online participation, adopt the “online + offline” approach, promote the government and media to convey mainstream views online, organize the mutual learning and communication between the new social strata groups offline, and improve the awareness of social responsibility of the new social strata. Make the new social class and its children set up the correct idea of intergenerational transmission. At the same time, accelerate the establishment of a more open, inclusive and fair access and clearance mechanism for new social classes, break class barriers, improve the mobility of the middle class, establish a more complete social security system, and weaken the negative impact of intergenerational transmission.

### **4.2 Increase access to educational resources and balance cultural reproduction**

Different social classes have great differences in the degree of access to educational resources. Social classes with large networks and fast information flow are more likely to obtain more valuable educational resources and information, and thus develop reasonable and convenient education methods for their children. The class with few family resources and weak cultural capital conversion ability lacks access to educational resources, which to some extent hinders the improvement of their children’s exam-oriented competitiveness. Therefore, education departments can link up with schools to establish a financial media platform for pushing education information to reduce educational inequality caused by poor information. At the same time, vigorously develop online education, through the expansion of online education to

break the time, space and number of extracurricular education restrictions, lower the threshold of education resources fees, so that children from ordinary families can learn knowledge and skills at a lower cost, so that they can give full play to their own advantages, increase the possibility of upward mobility.

### 4.3 Improve policy coherence and maintain social stability

Although the income of the new social class is much higher than the average level of our country, their work pressure is high, the risk of competition is high, the social evaluation and market status is lower than that of workers in the system, so the sense of identity of their own class is far less than that of the middle class in the system. Therefore, when formulating the United front policy, the government should pay attention to the coherence and stability of the policy, improve the social welfare security system, stabilize prices, improve the level of economic development, reduce their sensitivity to social risks through policy intervention and ideological guidance, so as to stimulate the autonomy and enthusiasm of the new social classes to establish a healthy intergenerational transmission mechanism. So that their children in the intergenerational transmission of the construction of the correct development of life and career development. At the same time, the stability of social mentality and social expectations can help to improve the social satisfaction of new social classes, thus increasing their network participation in political participation, promoting the realization of information and resource sharing between classes, optimizing class classification, and highlighting the advantages of the respective groups of new social classes.

The social capital of the new social class can be transferred from education, occupation, human capital and other levels. Due to their special occupational background, the transmission of cultural capital is more direct in the intergenerational transmission process, while the transmission of occupation and human capital is completed by indirect conversion. With the continuous optimization of economic structure, the intergenerational transmission path of new social classes has become more mature and generalized. In order to ensure social equity and prevent the intensification of “Matthew effect”, it is fully necessary to optimize the intergenerational transmission path. The country needs to provide correct guidance and improve the guarantee of people’s livelihood on the basis of strengthening the integration of united front. Only in this way can we promote further cooperation among all social strata, promote benign transmission between generations, and intensify the internal power of economic growth driven by the middle class outside the system.

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